

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05

SP-02 L-01 PM-03 INR-05 INRE-00 CIAE-00 A-01 OC-01

CCO-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-10 OMB-01 PRS-01 /054 W

----- 084079

O P 311625Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1099

INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

JCS

SECDEF

USDEL MC

USCINCEUR

USDOCOSOUTH

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN

CINCUSNAVEUR

USEUCOM

USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8392

LIMDIS

EO 11652: MARR PFOR GR US

TAGS: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - RECOMMENDATIONS ON TIMING
AND OBJECTIVES OF THIRD PLENARY ROUND

REF: A. ATHENS 8020; B. ATHENS 8086; C. ATHENS 8227

1. ON BASIS OF THE AMBASSADOR'S RECENT SERIES OF
MEETINGS WITH GREEK POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING CARAMANLIS
AND BITSIOS, AND STEARNS-CALOGERAS MEETINGS ON OCT 16
AND OCT 24 (REFS A AND C), WE ARE IN A POSITION TO MAKE
CONSIDERED RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TIMING AND OBJECTIVES
OF A THIRD PLENARY ROUND IN THE US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS
WHICH THE GREEK SIDE HAS PROPOSED BE SCHEDULED FOR THE LATTER
PART OF NOVEMBER.

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2. WE START WITH TWO BASIC ASSUMPTIONS: THE FIRST IS THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WISHES A THRID PLENARY ROUND BEFORE THE GREEK PARLIAMENT GOES INTO ITS LONG CHRISTMAS RECESS IN MID-DECEMBER. IN GREEK EYES THEREFORE THE TIMING OF THE THIRD ROUND, LIKE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS THEMSELVES, HAS MORE POLITICAL THAN PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE. GREEK GOVERNMENT WISHES TO CONVEY IMPRESSION THAT "PROGRESS IS BEING MADE". THIS OBJECTIVE IS PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN ACHIEVING SPECIFIC NEW DECISIONS ON THE COURSE OF A THIRD ROUND. OUR SECOND ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT DOES NOT REPEAT NOT HAVE CLEARLY IN MIND EITHER A TERMINAL DATE FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS OR A DETAILED AND IMMUTABLE SET OF PRACTICAL OBJECTIVES. INDEED, OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE GREEKS OVER THE COURSE OF NINE MONTHS OF NEGOTIATIONS AT ALL LEVELS TENDS TO CONFIRM THAT THE GREEK SIDE HAS BEEN IMPROVISING WITHIN A SET OF EXTREMELY GENERAL GUIDE LINES LAID DOWN BY THE PRIME MINISTER. WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED FEW HARD AND FAST GREEK POSITIONS, AND SOME GREEK POSITIONS, SUCH AS THAT ON HELLENIKON, WHICH APPEARED INFLEXIBLE IN FEB. DURING THE FIRST PLENARY ROUND HAVE BECOME LESS SO AS TIME GOES BY. WE HAVE THEREFORE GAINED BY PROTRACTING DISCUSSIONS, BY ADDRESSING ISSUES AT SEVERAL DIFFERENT LEVELS, AND BY RETAINING A SHARPER FOCUS ON OUR OWN OBJECTIVES THAN THE GREEKS HAVE HAD ON THEIRS.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR TACTICS IN NEGOTIATIONS TO DATE HAVE BEEN REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL. BY CONTINUALLY STRESSING TO THE GREEK SIDE THAT WE ARE CONSCIOUS OF THEIR POLITICAL CONCERNS, BUT THAT THEY MUST SHOW EQUIVALENT UNDERSTANDING OF OUR OPERATING REQUIREMENTS -- REQUIREMENTS WHICH AFFECT THE SECURITY INTERESTS OF BOTH COUNTRIES -- WE HAVE TO SOME EXTENT MODIFIED THE ADVERSARY CHARACTER WHICH THE NEGOTIATIONS ASSUMED AT THE OUTSET AND HAVE PERSUADED THE GREEKS TO THINK MORE IN TERMS OF SEARCHING FOR MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISES AND LESS IN TERMS OF UNILATERALLY-DEFINED CONSIDERATIONS OF "GREEK SOVEREIGNTY". THIS PROCESS SHOULD BE CONTINUED AND WE BELIEVE CAN BE CONTINUED IN A THIRD PLENARY ROUND.

4. WE THEREFORE SEE A THIRD ROUND NOT AS AN OCCASION
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FOR CONCESSIONS BY THE AMERICAN SIDE BUT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBTAIN FROM THE GREEK SIDE SOME PUBLIC AFFIRMATION OF THE MUTUALITY OF OUR INTERESTS. THIS IN FACT SHOULD BE OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE. GREEK OFFICIALS FREQUENTLY ACKNOWLEDGE PRIVATELY OR ON BACKGROUND THAT GREECE NEEDS CLOSE MILITARY TIES WITH THE US. THE GREEK GOVERNMENT HAS COME CLOSE TO SAYING THE SAME THING PUBLICLY IN RECENT MONTHS, THOUGH USUALLY WITH QUALIFICATIONS RELATED

TO THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AND A SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF GREEK-TURKISH DIFFERENCES IN THE AEGEAN. WE WOULD HOPE THAT IN A THIRD PLENARY ROUND WE WOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN FROM THE GREEK SIDE MORE EXPLICIT ASSURANCES ALONG THESE LINES AND THAT WHATEVER COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED AT THE END OF THE ROUND WOULD REFLECT THIS. WE CANNOT OF COURSE GUARANTEE THAT CARAMANLIS AND THE GREEK GOVT WILL BE PREPARED TO SAY PUBLICLY WHAT THEY IMPLY PRIVATELY. CARAMANLIS HAS BEEN EXTREMELY SKILLFUL IN MAINTAINING THE APPEARANCE OF A NATIONAL CONSENSUS, THEREBY SPARING HIMSELF SERIOUS ATTACK FROM THE OPPOSITION, BY EMPHASIZING HIS ROLE AS A NATIONAL LEADER WHO IS DETERMINED TO REPAIR GREEK PRESTIGE AND ENHANCE GREECE'S STATURE INTERNATIONALLY. THIS HAS LED HIM TO DOWNPLAY GREECE'S DEPENDENCE ON THE US AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY MAKE HIM RELUCTANT TO TURN THE THIRD PLENARY ROUND INTO A THUMPING PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF US-GREEK SOLIDARITY. WE BELIEVE HOWEVER THAT SOME MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION IS POSSIBLE AND WOULD REPRESENT A POSITIVE THIRD ROUND OBJECTIVE FOR THE US SIDE. BY PUSHING FOR IT WE CAN AT A MINIMUM DEFLECT ANY GREEK EFFORT IN THE THIRD PLENARY TO OBTAIN PRACTICAL CONCESSIONS THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO GRANT.

5. IN REVIEWING THE SPECIFIC PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE THIRD ROUND AND THE PROGRESS IN SUBGROUP MEETINGS, WE THINK THAT ENOUGH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE FIELDS OF SOFA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS TO BE ABLE TO REGISTER SOLID ACCOMPLISHMENTS REASONABLY SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES AND WHICH DO NOT IMPINGE ON GREECE'S NATO DISCUSSIONS. BOTH THE AMBASSADOR IN HIS RECENT MEETINGS WITH TOP GOG OFFICIALS AND STEARNS IN HIS MEETINGS WITH CALOGERAS HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT WE CANNOT PERMIT THE GREEKS TO USE A THIRD PLENARY ROUND AS AN OCCASION TO REOPEN FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS OR TO INTRODUCE MAJOR ISSUES NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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HITHERTO RAISED BY THE GREEK SIDE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO REMIND THEM OF THIS. GIVEN THE GREEK PENCHANT FOR IMPROVISATION, THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY WILL INTRODUCE A SUBJECT WHICH WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS, AS THEY RAISED TATOI AT THE END OF THE SECOND PLENARY, BUT SUCH EFFORTS CAN ALWAYS BE DEFLECTED IN THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

6. WE RECOMMEND THEREFORE THAT WE BE AUTHORIZED TO INFORM CALOGERAS THAT WE ARE READY TO ENGAGE IN A THIRD PLENARY BUT THAT THE LATTER PART OF NOVEMBER IS TOO EARLY AND THAT WE WOULD PREFER THE ROUND TO BEGIN THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 8. WE WILL ALSO NEED FROM THE GREEK GOVT A CLEARER IDEA OF THE AGENDA THEY PROPOSE AND THE SPECIFIC SUBJECTS THEY WANT TO RAISE. THIS IS A PREREQUISITE SINCE OUR OWN PREPARATORY WORK MUST HAVE A SHARPER FOCUS THAN IS AFFORDED BY THE

GRAB-BAG OF ITEMS MENTIONED BY CALOGERAS TO STEARNS ON
OCT 24 (REF C).

7. IN CONNECTION WITH PREPARATIONS FOR A THIRD PLENARY
AND IF WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONCERNED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS
BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL, STEARNS PROPOSES RETURN ON CON-
SULTATION TO ASSIST IN FRAMING SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND TACTICS.
DEPENDING ON THE DEPARTMENT'S REACTION TO OUR RECOMMENDATION
THAT THE THIRD PLENARY BEGIN THE WEEK OF DEC 8, STEARNS
PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON IN THE LAST WEEK
OF NOVEMBER JUST BEFORE POSITION PAPERS HAVE BEEN PUT INTO
FINAL FORM.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY BASES, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ATHENS08392
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ADJUSTED PER ATHENS 8833
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750378-1107
From: ATHENS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975103/aaaaacev.tel
Line Count: 182
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 ATHENS 8020, 75 ATHENS 8086, 75 ATHENS 8227
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <10 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-GREEK BASE NEGOTIATIONS - RECOMMENDATIONS ON TIMING
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, US, GR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006